



Davidson Institute
Fellows Scholarship

For Immediate Release
August 30, 2021

Contact: Megan Bedera
775-997-5690
Megan@AmplifyRelations.com

**RICHARDSON TEEN AWARDED \$10,000 SCHOLARSHIP FOR GENE THERAPY
RESEARCH TO REDUCE NEURODEGENERATION**

**Parisa Vaziri Named A 2021 Davidson Fellows
Scholarship Winner**

Richardson, Texas – The Davidson Fellows Scholarship Program has announced the 2021 scholarship winners. Among the honorees is 18-year-old Parisa Vaziri of Richardson. Vaziri won a \$10,000 scholarship for her project, *The Neuro-Protective Role of FOXO in a PINK1 Loss-of-Function Based Model of Neurodegeneration in Drosophila melanogaster*. She is one of only 20 students across the country to be recognized as a 2021 scholarship winner.

“Being a Davidson Fellow is extremely meaningful to me,” said Vaziri. “It shows me that the research I’m conducting has the potential of having a large impact on the future, which gives me the confidence and determination to continue my work.”

For her project, Vaziri explored the connection between the FOXO gene and its potential to reduce neurodegeneration. Using fruit flies, Vaziri compared the results when the FOXO gene was overexpressed and found that the group of flies with the overexpressed FOXO gene had significantly healthier neurons, motor function and increased lifespan, despite the fact that all of the fruit flies in the experiment were predisposed to neurodegeneration.

Vazira will attend Yale University in the fall where she plans to study neuroscience, and hopes to continue her research, and development of life-saving and affordable brain technology and gene therapy.

“The 2021 Davidson Fellows Scholarship recipients have risen to the challenges of a global pandemic to complete significant projects within their fields of study,” said Bob Davidson, founder of the Davidson Institute. “To be awarded this recognition, these students have shown immense skill and work ethic, and they should be commended as they continue their educational and research journeys while continuing to work to solve some of the world’s most vexing problems.”

The 2021 Davidson Fellows will be honored during a virtual ceremony in September 2021.

The Davidson Fellows Scholarship program offers \$50,000, \$25,000 and \$10,000 college scholarships to students 18 or younger, who have completed significant projects that have the potential to benefit society in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, literature and music. The Davidson Fellows Scholarship has provided more than \$8.6 million in scholarship funds to 386 students since its inception in 2001, and has been named one of the most prestigious undergraduate scholarships by [U.S. News & World Report](#). It is a program of the

Cont.

Davidson Institute, a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Reno, Nev. that supports profoundly gifted youth.

About the Davidson Institute

Founded by Bob Davidson in 1999, the Davidson Institute recognizes, nurtures and supports profoundly intelligent young people, and provides opportunities for them to develop their talents to make a positive difference. The Institute offers support through a number of programs and services, including the Davidson Fellows Scholarship and the [Davidson Academy of Nevada](#). For more information about the 2021 Davidson Fellows, please visit: DavidsonGifted.org/gifted-programs/fellows-scholarship

###

High-resolution photos are available at www.davidsongifted.org/gifted-programs/fellows-scholarship